

9 December 2009

Ms Clair Pyper
Strategic Director of Education and Children Services
Slough Borough Council
Town Hall
Bath Road
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Dear Ms Pyper

Children's services annual rating

Ofsted guidance published in May 2009 explained that the annual rating would derive from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant *Every Child Matters* indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS).

In considering the evidence in the profile to determine the children's services rating for 2009 it has become clear that the continuing gaps in the data are significant, particularly those relating to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. Ofsted has decided therefore to use 2009 as a transitional year easing into the full application of the new system in 2010. As a consequence, although the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's rating, we have interpreted the performance bands with flexibility and exercised professional judgement with caution.

The annual rating derives from a four point scale:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, a rating of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, a rating of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects.

Children's services rating 2009

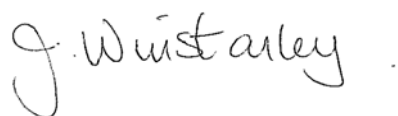
Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Slough Borough Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. Nurseries, secondary schools, sixth forms, the pupil referral unit and the General Further Education College are particularly good in comparison to the average in similar areas and for England as a whole. Approximately one third of nurseries, secondary schools and sixth forms are outstanding. Childcare and childminder settings are satisfactory. The proportion of good or better primary schools is above the average for similar areas, but approximately one in three schools are no better than satisfactory. The performance of special schools is mixed with one outstanding, one good and one adequate school. The quality of provision is good in fostering and adoption services. One children's home is outstanding and the other is good. Private fostering arrangements are satisfactory. The unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need, identified strengths in the responsiveness of services to local need and the good partnership work supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people. Tackling delays in completing assessments was identified as the key area for priority action.

Performance against the large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with or above similar areas and the national figures. Despite poor outcomes for many children at the end of primary school, achievement by young people at age 16 is good and improving. The gap in attainment between the majority and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is closing. The local authority has very effective arrangements in place to identify and support those at risk of disengaging from school.

The children's services rating is provided for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The rating of local authority children's services will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of each local authority's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) organisational assessment and therefore to the score for each local authority overall.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA